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Student Assn. Gradually Became Recruiting Pool for the CIA

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 25—Before S. Avrea Ingram Jr. of Talladega, Ala., died mysteriously in a New York hotel room at the age of 30, he spent the exotic last four years of his life living where the action was in domestic and international student politics.

Ingram graduated from the ranks of the National Student Assn. to become an agent for the Central Intelligence Agency. He was, in fact, one of the two people who first permanently hitched the two organizations together—creating a relationship that went much deeper than one which merely created pro-American propaganda abroad.

Ingram's transition tells much about the beginnings of a relationship that eventually wound "around every facet of American life that has any connection outside the United States," as Sen. Richard B. Russell, D-Ga., put it this week.

But Ingram's death conceals much about how the CIA originally got into the business of subsidizing the international programs of private groups from labor, students, women, secondary teachers, academics and intellectuals.

The NSA-Ingram-CIA link is specific. Ingram was:

- o International vice-president of NSA for two terms from September, 1951, to September, 1953 during the period that CIA gave the first of its regular payments to support NSA's international program in the propaganda fight against international communism. The president of NSA that first year was William T. Dentzer, now head of the United State aid mission to Peru.

- o Associate secretary of the coordinating secretariat of the International Student Conference in Leyden, Holland from 1953 to 1956. The ISC also received CIA funds according to the disclosures of the past two weeks. In this job, Ingram succeeded Dentzer who left NSA after his presidency to join ISC.

- o An ISC field worker in Vienna during and just after the Hungarian uprising of October, 1956. His overt job was to help escaping student-freedom fighters fleeing Hungary to resettle and resume their studies in the West. What else he may have been doing is not known.

- o Then, suddenly, Avrea Ingram was dead. He had returned to this country after Vienna and took up residence in the Irving Hotel at 26 Gramercy Park, New York.

At noon on Feb. 5, 1957, a maid found Ingram lying nude on the floor with a leather belt around his neck attached to the knob of a desk drawer.

The medical examiner called the death "asphyxia by hanging" and said the indications were suicide. Some of his friends and his relatives were unable to accept that finding.

Why?

OUT OF CHARACTER

For one thing, suicide seemed out of character. Avrea Ingram was no worrier. He was remembered as "a man who never lost his cool," according to one former NSA officer.

Secondly, there was the CIA relationship.

After the funeral, which he attended in Anniston, Ala., Avrea's old friend Bill Dentzer introduced himself to the Ingram family. He took Avrea Jr.'s father and his

uncle, Stanton B. Ingram, back to his hotel room, swore them to secrecy and revealed himself as a CIA agent.

Then he said Avrea had also served his country well in intelligence work. Stanton Ingram recalls Dentzer saying: "If the Communists wanted to kill for their own gain they would certainly want to kill Avrea Jr. He would be be No. 1 on their list."

Ingram's father, a retired businessman, first refused to talk to a reporter about the death of his only child. Later, he said:

"I have been asked not to talk about this death by the government.

But all the recent revelations about the CIA and NSA have caused people to wonder. Carl M. Sapers, an NSA official in 1950-'52 and now a member of the Boston law firm of Hill and Barlow, said in a recent letter to someone in Washington:

"I am now beginning to wonder whether there is not some relation between the CIA involvement and his (Ingram's) death.

For anyone wanting to check the CIA-NSA relationships that have just been disclosed now 10 years ago all the links were there:

- o Ingram and Dentzer to NSA and ISC, through the public record.

- o Ingram and Dentzer to the CIA through Dentzer's own admission.

- o And finally, Ingram to the Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs, which served as a conduit for CIA funds flowing to NSA and ISC by examination of Ingram's death certificate.

The certificate listed Ingram as a "research consultant" working for a David Davis of 431 E. 20th St. David Davis served from 1952 to 1961 as executive director of the foundation, which is now headed by Harry Lunn, another former NSA president.

The Avrea Ingrams and William Dentzers were students during the Korean war. They were liberal intellectuals who saw a need to support causes of social revolution both at home and abroad. NSA received condemnation as a Communist front from many quarters because of its liberal stands for civil rights for American Negroes, against the then rampaging Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis., for academic freedom, against colonialism and, finally, against totalitarianism in any form, including communism.

It was not easy for the organization to raise money.

So the students, frustrated in their attempts to raise money from private sources and other government agencies, found themselves in touch with the CIA. "There was some precedent.

In 1950, NSA had wanted to send a pro-American delegation to a student congress in Prague to counter the impressions a Communist-oriented group of Americans would almost certainly make.

But the officers could not raise money from their Madison, Wis., headquarters in an abandoned schoolhouse. One day an old friend called on Frederic Delano Houghteling, the executive secretary, and hinted that some money might be available.

The friend took Houghteling for a ride on a lonely

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